

IN FOCUS

The Official Publication of the Jamaican Canadian Association
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August 2008 Issue

Students sacrifice lunchtime for a better future

Students of three middle schools in the Jane Finch community came together in a celebratory mood on Monday June 16 to commemorate the successful conclusion of a gruelling school semester where they gave up their lunch breaks to work on their social and emotional well being.

An initiative developed by the JCA, in partnership with the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Police Service Unit 31 Division, the Leaders in Partnership (LIP) Program is designed to address the social and emotional needs of children in developing a more positive attitude towards school and their community.

The program further offers support to parents, who may need some guidance in managing their children's communication and interpersonal development. Pamella Seaton-Brissett, the coordinator of the program states "The LIP project provides a safe and supportive environment where children are free

Cont. on page 3

Cari-go bring come..." Pride and Glory"

Stop the Press! Twice we arrived at a final print decision on the In Focus but the suspense of the Olympics sent us back to the drawing board to report on some glorious moments in Caribbean and Jamaican track and field history. Where were you when this happened?



When the final track was laid, six Caribbean runners stood tall for one of the most notable prime time moment of the Olympics, the men's 100 meters final; three Jamaicans, two Trinidadians and one Netherlands Antillean. Within 9.69 seconds, the new Olympic record rolled off followed by the other times. The world crowned a King, Jamaica's Usain Bolt. "Like a bolt of lightening di bwoy Bolt left everyone".

Richard Thompson of Trinidad & Tobago claimed the silver medal for his second place finish to 'Cari' two Caribbean runners to the podium for the prestigious 100 meter final; Jamaica gold, Trinidad & Tobago

silver. History has been re-written in black, green and gold. In 1976 summer Olympics in Montreal, Haseley Crawford of Trinidad & Tobago took the gold and Donald Quarrie of Jamaica the silver.

Not to be outdone, three Jamaican women wrote their history and constructed their own podium in the 100 meter final. Shelly-ann Fraser was crowned Queen in 10.78 seconds. Kerron Stewart and Sherone Simpson received silver medals each for their second place tie to complete a medal sweep and supporting the chant with their Queen, their King and the rest of the Jamaican athletes... "Irie!". Now, tell me if tears came to your eyes when three Jamaican men lined up for the 100 meters final. Tell me if tears came to your eyes when Usain Bolt beat his chest as he rolled off 9.69 seconds cool like a Negril sea breeze. Tell me if tears came to your eyes when Shelly-Ann Fraser gave a fist pump as she crossed the finish line. Tell me if tears came to your eyes when three Jamaican women lined up for the 100

meters final and claimed the podium for themselves. Tell me if tears came to your eyes when these athletes draped themselves in black, green and gold. Now tell me if you didn't smile when I tell you that the cellular phone network was tied up in Jamaica. Tell me if you were not overcome by "pride and glory". As one friend told me at the conclusion of the men 100 meters final, "The Caribbean has great people". Big up to the many athletes from the Caribbean who participated in the 2008 Olympics games! 'Nuff Big up' to the Jamaican athletes and their coaches. Big up and 'Nuff Respec' to the nation of Jamaica and its Diaspora around the world!

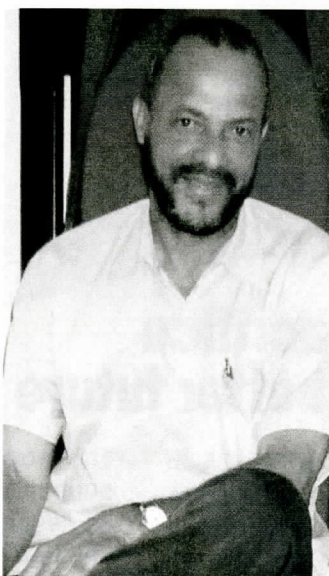
All Hail, King Usain Bolt and Queen Shelly-ann Fraser!
Yes wi can!

Cheers,
The Mad Typist©2008

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MEETING
AUGUST 24, 2008
AT 2 PM**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Funds provided by Trillium Foundation. We are currently working on plans to launch phase one of our "YES WE CAN" fundraising campaign which will be a raffle. The launch is slated for November and we will keep you posted.

We are nearing the end of an organizational review and hopefully we will be able to report to you on this at the August membership meeting. Starting immediately we are working on a number of fronts to improve on our membership services. We now have a financial officer which will result in tax receipts being issued in a timely manner. We will be hiring a file clerk to organize our records; again this will result in better membership service.

We are looking at a major overhaul of how we operate our social services. We are in discussions with the bank to renegotiate our closed mortgage to an open/variable or a secured

line of credit. This would allow paying down the mortgage on a regular basis as the fundraising activities begin to generate funds. In addition, we would be able to get it at a lower percentage because mortgage rates have fallen since we renewed our mortgage two years ago.

Finally, we are changing the way we recognize our volunteers; details of which will be presented at the August membership meeting. We are seeking volunteers for the Membership and Fundraising committees, meetings are held once per month ten times per year. Do give me a call if you have any questions about volunteering or any concerns.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer and I look forward to seeing you at the membership meeting later this month.

In Solidarity,
Herman Stewart

It is indeed a pleasure for me to write my first news letter report as your new President. It has been a very hectic two months since I assumed the Presidency and as such there is a lot to report on. Upon being elected President, I made a commitment to tackle two issues immediately.

Fundraising was identified as the top priority along with restructuring of our social services delivery. At the first Board of Directors meeting the Directors unanimously endorsed these two issues as priority. We started on Fundraising by hiring a Fundraising Coordinator with

PETER'S STORY - JCA CLIENT SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Peter was recently released from jail for aggravated assault. He was granted bail and one of his release conditions made by the Court was that he attended JCA's K. Club. Peter participated actively in the program. When he returned to court for sentencing, the Judge asked him what he learned in the program and

how he had utilized those skills in his life. Peter was able to give the Judge full details of how the program had helped him and the choices he would have made prior to participating in the program. The Judge was so impressed with Peter's response and the enthusiasm he shared with the court that he received

probation. The Judge encouraged Peter to continue using his new skills to make better choices and rebuild his life. Needless to say, Peter felt very grateful to the JCA and particularly to his Counsellor Grace Williams.

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Morale has been high at JCA this quarter as we continue to develop and enhance our programs and services to meet the needs of our clientele.

We are proud to offer a range of professional services including; assessment, service coordination and planning, individual, family and group counseling. We are committed to fostering a positive change and a culture

of respect, acceptance and safety for our community so they can utilize our services and resources to build skills, confidence and connection.

The JCA embarked on its organizational review in May of 2008. The consultant conducted separate focus groups with member, volunteers, clients, staff and Board member. The focus group was intended to help the association evaluate its overall performance and to identify a strategic approach that best suits the association. The ORG review is expected to conclude in September 08.

We are still actively negotiating our Collective Agreement with the Union. These meetings continue to be amicable.

Our greatest achievements this year are the result of the efforts of many people, i.e. clients, staff, volunteers, community members, partnering agencies and funders. You just have to read Peter's Diana's, Mark's and Ronald's stories to realize there are some extraordinary things happening in the community as a result of our combined efforts.

We thank all of you who add tremendous value to our programs and services. We know with your continued support we will make a difference in the lives of the people we serve and the wider community.

Nzinga Walker

Continued from P1...

to explore a variety of feelings through structured activities." The program uses a "crime prevention model" of intervention, which is being offered each semester during the lunch period over 10 weeks.

It is aimed at providing appropriate strategies, helping participants build techniques to deal with stressful situation as well as developing effective communication skills.

The ceremony was well attended by graduates from partnering schools: Oakdale Middle School, Amesbury Middle School and St. James Francis School. The guest speaker for the occasion was Deputy Chief Keith Forde. There were representatives

from Judy Sgro, MP for York West, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Toronto District School Board Superintendent, United Way, 31 Division, Community Agencies and JCA staff and Board of Directors. Each graduate received a certificate in honor of their participation to the LIP Program throughout the year. In addition they received a certificate of recognition from the Honorable Judy Sgro, MP York West.

Keith L. Forde Deputy Chief of the Toronto Police Service said "The LIP Program gives our young people a second chance to learn from their mistakes. The challenge for these young minds is to realize that in life we all have

choices and making the correct choices leads them to the road of success. With the school being a strong partner in this program, it reinforces to students that education opens opportunities and that education is the insurance policy they can always fall back on. The LIP Program helps our young people develop a desire for education and a hunger to learn. Together the parents, teachers and community partners are helping to build these student's self esteem and encourage them to take the appropriate steps to success. As a community we are showing that we care about the success of each and every one of our people. If these young

people succeed we all succeed".

Through the services it provides, the JCA is able to reach thousands of children, students, parents, families, seniors, new immigrants, job-seekers, etc. The association provides a variety of social service and membership programs to our constituencies including new immigrant settlement, family and youth counselling, violence against women, support programs for children and parents engaged with the education system, among other services and programs.

By Rosemarie Powell



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identified as the
top priority along
with restructuring
of our social
services delivery.**

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Remember the 3NE rule and choose food the ecological way:

- Naked** - no dressing
- Natural** - no preservatives
- Near** - no hassle
- Equitable** - a fair share for all

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It is back to school again and like many parents, you are probably concerned with purchasing all the necessities for your children to start off a successful academic year. Books, supplies and clothing are probably some of the items on your shopping list. But don't forget about planning their food! One of the mistakes we make as parents is to forget the importance of preparing our children to make healthy and ecological eating choices.

Society's tendency to overindulge in foods and other consumable items is a real threat to the environment and to our health. We have moved away from growing our own food to purchasing foods that have been pumped, prepared, polished, packaged and shipped to our tables. By the time these foods get into our system, their nutritional content has been significantly diminished. In the process, they leave a negative impact on the environment in terms of excess fuel consumption, non-recyclable waste and dangerous toxins in the air, soil and water. Our children, the future of this planet are the ones who will suffer most.

We are already seeing the results of this modern lifestyle on our children as indicated in one report published in 2004 by Dieticians of Canada, "School Food and Nutrition Recommendations for Ontario Ministry of Education Regarding Snacks and Beverages Dispensed by Vending Machines". This report confirmed there is a

substantial increase in the number of young children who are overweight in our community.

Parents and the school system have a joint responsibility to educate children about their health and nutrition. The truth is children spend more time in daycares, schools and camps than at home and due to the demands of daily life, it can be sometimes difficult for parents alone to control their eating habits, particularly as they become older.

Unfortunately, it is often within the schools, the very place where children are supposed to be educated in a safe environment where they have access to unhealthy junk that clogs their arteries. These factors combined with reduced physical activity will eventually lead them to become overweight and sick with type two diabetes. Thankfully, the Ontario Ministry of Education is giving our children a fighting chance. The *Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act* was passed in April 2008 and will require schools to drop trans fat from food and beverage sold in schools. With the ministry's oversight and your insight, your child will be off to a good start as well-nourished children are more ready to learn, participate and stay active even as they grow into adulthood.

Help your children make

healthy and ecological choices. Involve them in planning and preparing healthy meals as they may be more willing to eat the dishes they help fix. More importantly, make sure your child eats breakfast. Breakfast provides children with the energy they need to listen and learn in school. Consider going a step further as suggested in the previous edition of the *In Focus*. Tip number four from Environment Canada encouraged us to choose foods produced organically, locally and in season. Look for foods in your local grocery stores and your local flea markets that have been produced in Ontario.

Ontario is also examining options for establishing nutrition standards in schools that conform to the new Canada Food Guide, which is an excellent tool to begin with. It can be found online at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>. A Web-based interactive tool is also available on this site. You and your child can visit this site and make your own personalized food guide. This will help you to plan weekly menus that your child thinks are tasty and you know are healthy.

When you are finished surfing the web, play outside together to get your 30 minutes of recommended daily exercise. There is still some sun left in the Summer. Now that's the spirit of a true Eco Ambassador!

By Rosemarie Powell



Hi there! Remember me, "TID BITS", I am back, just took a two-year break. First I must wish you a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer, most of it has already passed, therefore if there is any catching up to do you must hurry, the snowman is not far away in coming. I must also say that the summer has been fairly good so far in spite of the report that July was the most rainy and wettest month since environment Canada started keeping record in 1927. 193.2 mm of rain fell breaking the record set in July 1980.

Let me now turn to JCA, your association. You must have known by now that on May 25 2008, at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) the leadership was changed. Herman Stewart whom you all know very well was unanimously acclaimed to lead again. Since then many commendable endeavours have been pursued including the launch of a big fundraising raffle which you will be hearing about very soon and we are hoping that you will join the movement to make this venture a success. It is expected to yield us a minimum of fifty thousand

dollars (\$50,000) which will go directly to the mortgage.

On August 9th the Annual Independence Gala (Dinner-Dance) was held at the Centre. If you missed it then you would have missed a super function. J Douglas Band and Soul to Soul DJ kept the dance floor busy. Thanks to the planning committee especially to our executive vice president Audrey Campbell, the committee chair who went more than the hundred yards. Sandra Whiting the event coordinator must also be commended for a job well done.

This Association has many arms and the Caribbean Seniors Club is one of them. I, at this time would like to pay tribute to Amy Nelson, the president and especially to Eula Smith the tour planning coordinator. The Seniors meet at the Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These days are normally filled with many interesting activities for them, not to mention the many boat cruises and bus trips that Eula has worked diligently over the many years to establish.

The last two exciting cruises were Alaska and this February the Panama Canal, which included visits to Aruba, Costa Rica and Grand

Cayman. Amazingly, Costa Rica's agricultural products are similar to those of Jamaica, ackee, breadfruit, bananas, star apples etc.

Let us now turn our thoughts to Beijing, China,, where the Olympics are being held. There are two hundred and five (205) countries competing and China so far is leading in the medal standings, no surprise there. Because with them having six hundred and thirty nine (639) athletes competing which is more than double any other country. They are expected to do well. USA is in second place, Jamaica has made a very good showing with fifty seven (57)athletes, the standing is 52 track and field, three swimming, one cycling and one equestrian. We are looking forward Usain Bolt - 21 and Asafa Powell-25 the two fastest men in the world to take home a medal, preferably gold. To conclude, let me reiterate, by wishing you, your family and loved ones a safe, healthy and fun filled summer.

By Alton Telfer

The Seniors meet at the Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These days are normally filled with many interesting activities for them, not to mention the many boat cruises and bus trips...

Marcus Garvey Afro-Centric Resource Library

The Marcus Garvey Resource Library is greatly in need of the Afro-centric materials. Contributions should be made to Marcus Garvey Resource Library, c/o Education Committee, Jamaican Canadian Association. Donors may print his or her name on or in materials being donated to the library.

MARK'S STORY - JCA CLIENT SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Mark made contact with the Youth Outreach Worker on the street and expressed his need for assistance. Mark had no address because he had left home because he was not getting along with his parents. Mark found himself moving from one friends home to another, with no money to support himself. Mark did

not want to go home because he blamed his parents for the situation he was in and felt they would not get along. The YOW worker mediated between Mark and his family and encouraged him to move back home. Eventually, Mark was able to see that his life on the street was a lot worse than being at home. Mark also

realized that his parents' rules were about helping him to be a more productive person and not about making his life a "living hell". Mark moved back home and he is currently trying to secure employment so he can support himself and use his time in a productive way.



2008 Annual Independence Gala



Eating well and getting enough exercise helps to reduce the impact on our bodies and on our health.

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A forum on Women and the Environment was held at the JCA on June 14, 2008. Keynote Speaker Dr. Ann Phillips MSC, PHD, DIPAC was well received by participants. Dr. Phillips originally trained and worked as a molecular geneticist. Her concern about the impact on social and environmental factors on human health led her to do her doctoral dissertation entitled MOBILIZING our COMMUNITY AND HEALING OURSELVES.

Her presentation dealt with Women's Health and the Environment. She emphasized that women are now living in a different environment than earlier times. Women are conducting experiments on themselves though the use of hazardous contaminants. In the past 50 years, the use of synthetics has increased. Plastics are used more to make our lives more comfortable. More than 83,000 synthetics are registered but only 16% are tested and this is a risk to humans.

It is believed that 85% of diseases are partially caused by environmental factors. The World Health Organisation (WHO) focuses on preventing diseases through healthy environments. Gender, race, economics, working conditions; education and literacy also affect ones environment. In studying these trends, men and children have to be considered in different ways because of biology. The most vulnerable are women and children living in poverty. She noted that environmental hazardous materials are more likely to be set up in areas where Blacks and people of colour live.

Heavy metals, pesticides, solvents, radiation, persistent organic pollutants and water and soil pollution are sources of environmental contaminants. Even some food products we use in the homes are sources of contaminants. For example, Phenol, a plastic found in tins can be a source of environmental contamination.

There is much to be concerned about because although some cancers are genetic in origin, dose of exposure to contaminants, timing and multiple exposures may lead to cancer. Babies and seniors are the most at risk for contaminants because of their fragile immune systems. Babies are often exposed before even being born.

Environmental contaminants can be a great source of stress. Eating well and getting enough exercise helps to reduce the impact on our bodies and on our health. On an individual level, we should take into consideration where our food is grown and we should strive to eat foods of the highest quality. On a collective level, actions we can take include identifying sources of contaminants and advocate for their reduction or elimination and identify and fight against environmental racism.

Submitted by the Women's Committee

RONALD'S STORY - JCA CLIENT SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Ronald recently lost the job he held for over five years. Ronald was his family's primary bread winner so he felt an enormous stress to secure employment. He found it challenging exploring the job market because in the past he never needed an interview to

secure a job. After participating in the three-week employment program, Ronald's confidence grew and he felt ready for the job market. He was able to develop his resume, a cover letter and participated in a mock interview. Ronald also indicated that before

coming to the program he felt isolated and alone but the staff made him feel at home. In addition, he met other participants who had encountered the same challenges with job loss so he realized there was nothing wrong with him.

I shall return



Submitted by the Youth Affairs Committee (YAK). YAK to this! Dwaine Osbourne, Chair

"I shall return by Claude McKay"...the actual words to this poem I can never remember but most important to me is the message I got from it. To think back to my days in primary school in Clarendon, not Kingston for those who believe every Jamaican wants to be a Kingstonian, I had to memorize and recite this poem in front of my classmates not knowing the significance of the words or even caring to know...just get me down from in front of the class before my school shoes leave a great mark in the floor from twisting and turning.

Now, years after, I sit within my Canadian office cubicle staring at the Jamaican Gleaner online, at pictures of Jamaica's Independence Celebration; the costumes, the parade trucks, the food, the beautiful people, the many display of Jamaica's national colors and its flag. Drum percussion at each interval of singing "Jamaica" <Bam> in the National Anthem plays in my head as I placed myself amongst the

many Jamaicans celebrating our Independence. "What a bam bam...O Cherry O baby... This is the land of my birth. This is my Jamaica. The land of my birth..." - past festival songs continuously play in my head while I glanced at nothing every now and then out my office window...I Shall Return!

To cook two dumpling and share amongst friends with some 'sugar & water' married with laughter and chats under the coolest tree. I shall return to greet a stranger with a warm Jamaican smile- a smile that means, "I don't care if you like me or not but good morning to you and how do you do". I shall return to an early Sunday morning dip in Salt River mineral bath in Clarendon then follow it up with a cold drink of coconut water, definitely no imitation can or bottle version, the real deal with some jelly meat afterwards.

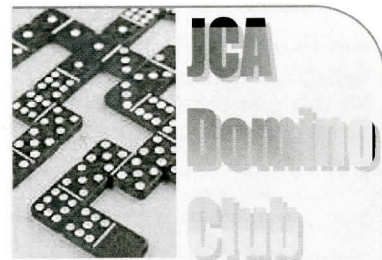
I shall return but while I am in my adopted country of Canada, I will help to keep the Jamaican spirit raised high. My kids will hear about the goodness of Mas Bingi who lived near mango bush and 'always looking out for your interest' Puhtus from down the lane. They will hear that they must make sure to eat a piece of roast bread fruit and ackee whenever they are in Jamaica. They will hear the story of Jamaica what was, what is and what can be. I recently listened to Hon. Robert Montague at JCA's

Independence Gala and he mentioned, "allow no man to tell your story" -

Let us take responsibility to keep Jamaica's history and goodness in the mind of our Canadian born kids and grandkids, and those who have ears to hear us. They will not only hear the stories but they can follow me or you to Jamaica to live it all. I wish to return to watch even my children feed chickens in the middle of the yard, bring out goats and frolic with man's best friend, the ever wagging tail dogs - now, you are truly thinking, 'dis writer really comes from county' and you are so right. While my past is behind me, it doesn't stop me from living some of it in the present and through the actions of others. Let us return by sharing our Jamaican history, pride and beauty with others. Let us return to the warm Jamaican sunshine smile through good and hard times. While we are in Canada and our hearts are in beautiful Jamaica, let's say it loud...I Shall Return!

The Mad Typist © 2008

I shall return but while I am in my adopted country of Canada, I will help to keep the Jamaican spirit raised high.



Come knock some bones and laugh and chat...

The JCA Domino Club meets on Fridays or Saturdays every week at the Jamaican Canadian Association inside the Games Room.

Call for more information:

Josephine Spence:
416-570-7601

Gifford Walker:
416-222-4695

If we don't have it... We will get it

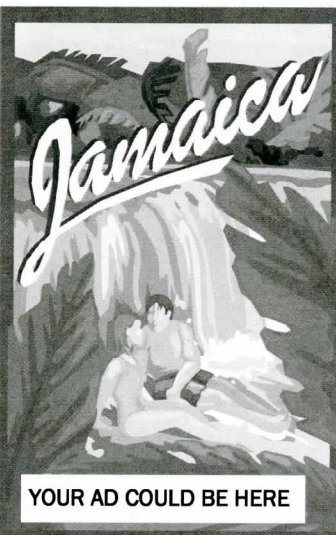
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